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Culture of peace

Operational activities for development: quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

Advancement of women

Prevention of armed conflict

Promotion and protection of human rights

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Note verbale dated 18 December 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the Secretary-General and, in its capacity as Chair of the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, has the honour to forward to the General Assembly herewith the text of the following resolutions and declarations adopted by the 127th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Quebec City on 26 October 2012:

- Report of the parliamentary field mission to Albania and Montenegro and report of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Committee on United Nations Affairs (items 118 and 25; see annexes I and III)
- Resolution on the situation in Mali (item 33; see annex II)
- Quebec City Declaration on Citizenship, Identity and Cultural Diversity (item 15; see annex IV)
- Plan of Action on Gender-Sensitive Parliaments (item 28; see annex V)

The Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations kindly requests the Office of the Secretary-General to circulate the present letter and the annexes thereto as a document of the General Assembly.

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Annex I to the note verbale dated 18 December 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Parliamentary field mission to Albania and Montenegro focuses on United Nations reform

10-14 September 2012

Background

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Committee on United Nations Affairs was established in early 2008 in the context of the growing partnership between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The Committee meets in plenary once a year, with the participation of representatives from all IPU member Parliaments. The Committee holds hearings with senior United Nations officials, examines the status of implementation of international commitments, and helps to articulate a parliamentary contribution to major United Nations processes (climate change, sustainable development, the rights of indigenous peoples, women's empowerment, the rule of law in international affairs, etc.).

The work of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs is guided by an Advisory Group, composed of a select number of prominent legislators. The Advisory Group has a broad mandate, which includes taking stock of progress in implementing "One United Nations" reform ("Delivering as one") at the country level, aimed at achieving greater coherence of United Nations operations and enhanced aid effectiveness. To this end, field missions have been conducted in recent years to several countries implementing this new approach: United Republic of Tanzania (2008), Viet Nam (2009), Ghana (2011) and Sierra Leone (2011).[1]

The findings of these missions have been shared widely among IPU member Parliaments and the United Nations community. Several of the recommendations emerging from the missions have been taken up by the United Nations and reflected in policy documents, including the 2012 report of the United Nations Secretary-General on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (A/66/770) and the related General Assembly resolution (66/261), adopted by consensus in May 2012, with 90 Member States formally signing on as co-sponsors.

On the basis of this positive experience, and given the scope for further progress in this area, the Advisory Group decided to pursue its work by undertaking a field mission to a different geographical area: South-East Europe. With strong support from the Parliaments of the two host countries, a new mission was

[1] Reports from these previous field missions are available at http://www.ipu.org/un-e/un-cmt.htm.

conducted from 10 to 14 September 2012 to Albania and Montenegro.[2] The mission was led by Mr. Mélégué Traoré (Burkina Faso), President of the Advisory Group, and included Ms. Katri Komi (Finland), Mr. Salah Derradji (Algeria) and Mr. José Carlos Mahia (Uruguay) as Advisory Group members, IPU representatives Anda Filip and Miguel Bermeo, and Ms. Carina Galvalisi from the Parliament of Uruguay.

During its mission, the Advisory Group met with a wide spectrum of stakeholders involved in the "Delivering as one" process: parliamentary officials (speakers of Parliament, chairs and members of select parliamentary committees), government representatives (ministries of finance, economic development, foreign affairs, etc.), United Nations country teams, development partners (bilateral donors and representatives of the European Union (EU) and civil society organizations (CSOs) involved in international development programmes). In both Albania and Montenegro, the Advisory Group also had the opportunity to visit joint United Nations projects in the field.

Compared with previous missions, the Advisory Group found very different political and economic realities in these countries of South-Eastern Europe, which in turn have shaped the nature of United Nations interventions in Albania and Montenegro. Both countries have been undergoing an accelerated democratization process since the fall of communism 20 years ago. Both are upper-middle-income countries aspiring to membership in the European Union: Albania submitted its formal application for EU membership in April 2009, whereas Montenegro was granted the status of EU candidate country in December 2010.

Albania, once one of the poorest and most isolated countries of the former socialist bloc, has made huge strides in economic and political reform. These in turn have opened up the country to foreign investment, especially in the development of energy and transportation infrastructure. Important social problems remain, however, including growing economic inequality, organized crime and a high level of violence against women.

As noted by the Speaker of Parliament, Montenegro is a country which, in less than a decade, has gone through major changes in statehood: from an integral part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992, to the subsequent dissolution of that country and the Bosnian and Croatian wars that followed, to the more decentralized state union of Serbia and Montenegro in 2003, to the referendum that granted independence to Montenegro in May 2006. With a population of just over 600,000 inhabitants, Montenegro continues to be a multinational State where the political scene is permeated by multiple ethnic political parties.

"One United Nations" in Albania

As witnessed during the previous missions undertaken by the Advisory Group, United Nations reform — under the banner of "Delivering as one" or "One United Nations" — aims to align United Nations operations at the country level with the

[2] Since 2007, the One United Nations reform is being implemented by eight pilot countries: Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Rwanda, Pakistan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, and Viet Nam. A number of other countries have voluntarily adopted the approach, as "self-starters": Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Comoros, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Montenegro, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia.

development priorities identified and set forth by national authorities. Successful reforms will lead to the United Nations better pooling its comparative advantages and providing the kind of strategic expertise that it is uniquely placed to offer. National ownership would be enhanced, ensuring that international aid is demand- rather than supply-driven and that programmes and projects support national development priorities.

Albania, one of the eight "Delivering as one" pilot countries, signed the first "One United Nations" programme in October 2007 (for the 2007-2011 period). This first programme was based on the National Strategy for Development and Integration and was geared mainly towards supporting the efforts of Albania to prepare for accession to the European Union. A total of $98 million was dedicated to the implementation of five key areas of the programme: governance (31 per cent), basic services (27 per cent), environment (17 per cent), regional development (17 per cent) and participation (8 per cent). The One United Nations Coherence Fund, set up to facilitate donor support for the programme, financed 25 per cent of the total budget, with contributions from Austria, the European Commission, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. The "One United Nations" programme was supported by 14 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The vision and leadership of the Government have been vital for the success of the "One United Nations" approach in Albania.

The support provided by the first "One United Nations" programme has helped advance the priorities of Albania in each of the pillars of the programme, for example:

- In the area of governance: approval of the Strategy for Gender Equality and against Domestic Violence; initiation of the National Action Plan for Youth Employment 2010-2013; and finalization of the National Plan of Action for Children
- In the area of participation: adaptation and implementation of the National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion; the introduction of gender quotas in the 2011 local elections, although only 12.4 per cent were elected, whereas the lists included over 30 per cent of women candidates
- In the area of basic services: the law on pre-university education was reviewed to reduce disparity barriers; and qualifications and standards for teachers were further regulated
- In the area of the environment: new laws on environmental protection, environmental impact assessment and waste management were passed. In addition, a package of four new laws on climate change mitigation, in line with EU directives, is now ready for approval: renewable energy, energy efficiency, power generation and concessions. Progress was made on a national monitoring system, and reference laboratories and centres were established for air, soil, solid waste and wastewater, biodiversity, bio-monitoring and water
- In the area of regional development, the pace of reform has been somewhat slower. As a proposal for Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance funding, the Government has submitted to the EU an Operational Programme on Regional Development, based on a participatory process involving relevant line ministries and public consultations. Nevertheless, the need for capacity development remains high

- With the end of the pilot phase in 2011, the Government of Albania and the United Nations system formulated the second "One United Nations" programme, building on the experience, lessons learned and achievements of the first cycle. The new programme, signed in October 2011, will run from 2012 to 2016 as a common action plan for the Government, 19 United Nations agencies and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The areas of focus are governance and the rule of law, the economy and the environment, regional and local development, and inclusive social policy. The projected financial needs for the period 2012-2016 are on the order of $126 million, of which $75 million remains unfunded.

At the apex of the "One United Nations" management architecture is the Government Modernization Committee (chaired by a Cabinet minister), serving as the highest-level policy, coordination and decision-making authority. Under its guidance, the Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination is responsible for coordinating and following up on the implementation of joint United Nations-Government activities. The Director of the Department co-chairs, together with the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the Joint Executive Committee, which makes executive decisions on implementation of the annual workflows of programmes and allocations from the Coherence Fund. The United Nations country team, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, manages the overall implementation from the United Nations side through output working groups that bring together technical actors from line ministries and other relevant implementing parties. The One United Nations Coherence Fund is a facility for donors to pool their resources in support of the programmes. Donors are encouraged to provide unearmarked, multi-year commitments to increase predictability of funding. The Fund complements the core and non-core resources of participating United Nations agencies. The Parliament of Albania is not involved in any way in these policy and coordination structures.

In terms of results, the Albanian authorities consider that the experience of the "One United Nations" approach is highly relevant, responsive to national needs and priorities and aligned with EU accession requirements and has helped increase Government ownership and strategic focus. It has also proved to be a flexible and resourceful programme in bridging small but critical gaps. The "One United Nations" programme has increased coordination, synergies, awareness and transparency for all key actors: United Nations agencies, Government, donors and other partners. It has allowed for a stronger and more unified voice and advocacy on human rights, social inclusion and gender. As to the United Nations system, it has increased the leadership of the Resident Coordinator and facilitated a change of mindset towards a more positive United Nations team spirit. The tools such as "One budget" and common annual workplans have shown their usefulness in terms of planning, predictability, strategic oversight and monitoring for both the United Nations and the Government. The common services offer less administrative costs and speedier responses to programme support. The "One United Nations" approach has also allowed for cost-effective entry points for the support of non-resident agencies, thus increasing the potential for better results.

As for the challenges ahead, Albanian officials in both the Foreign Ministry and the Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination have underscored that the positive changes in the operation of the United Nations country team have largely depended on the goodwill of members of the team themselves. The structures at United Nations Headquarters, however, are not yet sufficiently aligned in terms of

budgeting and reporting procedures, programme cycles and levels of delegation of authority towards the Resident Coordinator. Further progress of "One United Nations" reform will require changes at the Headquarters level, as at the country level it has advanced as far as it can. This is, in fact, one of the key conclusions reached at the Fifth High-level Intergovernmental Conference on "Delivering as one", held in Tirana from 27 to 29 June 2012.

On the donor side, two challenges were mentioned: first, a lingering resistance to accept donor coordination from the Government instead of maintaining their own priorities, which has a direct correlation with the preference to maintain earmarking in their contributions; and second, the difficulties encountered in providing multi-year funding. Both these issues affect predictability in the management of the Coherence Fund. Furthermore, in the case of Albania, several donors are beginning to phase out their support in light of progress towards Albania's accession to the EU. The large funding gap remaining in the current "One United Nations" programme ($75 million out of a total $126 million) will thus require different approaches to its financing if the new programme is to succeed.

Meetings that the mission held with representatives of donors and civil society tended to confirm the overall assessment and prospects for the "One United Nations" approach in Albania. This was also echoed by members of the United Nations country team.

With regard to the specific involvement of parliament, numerous instances of close interaction between parliamentary committees and the "One United Nations" programme were mentioned by all actors concerned, including members of civil society, who have been actively involved in joint efforts. Examples cited by the Director of the Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination include: the establishment of a parliamentary Committee on Population and Development; the creation of a Child Rights Parliamentary Caucus; work with the committees on health and social affairs on issues related to HIV and AIDS; work with the women members of parliament (MPs); capacity development initiatives with administrative parliamentary structures; preparation for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; advocacy work with the Speaker of Parliament on women's empowerment and combating gender-based violence; and work with several parliamentary structures to consult on and advocate legislative changes.

While these examples show the wealth of interactions between "One United Nations" and civil society partners with various structures of parliament — which has helped generate ample trust among the partners — the mission got the distinct impression that there were no clear instances where parliament could obtain an overall view of what is the global contribution of "One United Nations" to the development efforts of Albania. This indicates that the Parliament of Albania has no involvement in the overall direction of the "One United Nations" programme or in its oversight.

"One United Nations" in Montenegro

Montenegro is one of the "self-starter" countries with respect to the "One United Nations" approach. In June 2009, the Government and the United Nations country team agreed on the formulation of an integrated United Nations programme, results and budgeting framework for the period 2010-2016. A transition phase (2010-2011) signed in June 2010 initiated joint planning, programming and

implementation between the Government, the United Nations country team and partners, strengthened donor relations in support of the programme, built strong partnerships with relevant national institutions and development partners, and set out to prove the value of the integrated United Nations programme. The three strategic programme pillars are: social inclusion, democratic governance and sustainable economic development and environmental protection. The United Nations expanded funding window for "Delivering as one" provided resources for each of these two years for a total of $1.6 million to help start the programme. It is also part of the Joint Resource Mobilization Strategy.

The integrated United Nations programme is now in its second phase, Consolidation and Evaluation (2012-2016); it reflects greater complementarities and synergy of support among United Nations organizations to contribute to national development priorities.

The integrated United Nations programme is governed by the Joint Country Steering Committee, composed of up to seven senior representatives of line ministries, all members of the United Nations country team, and donor representatives by invitation of the Steering Committee. It is co-chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration and the United Nations Resident Coordinator. The Joint Country Steering Committee exercises oversight of the design, implementation and monitoring of the integrated United Nations programme, including through the approval of the United Nations Annual Workplan. At the technical level, United Nations pillar working groups and the relevant government sector working groups engage in joint planning exercises, regular coordination activities and the monitoring of results.

The integrated United Nations programme created a harmonized organization with unity of purpose, coherence in management and efficiency in operations — all directed at one common goal: to enhance the development of Montenegro.

The Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator identified the following challenges after the initial period of the "Delivering as one" experience in Montenegro:

- An initial unclear perception by technical United Nations staff of "Delivering as one" and the relationship between their own work, the agency programme and the integrated United Nations programme
- A different understanding of "Delivering as one" between regional and country offices of certain agencies
- A culture change required on the part of both the United Nations and the Government, which led to delays in certain areas of work — the establishment of a functional interministerial coordination mechanism is required
- Initially, no common vision within the United Nations country team as to whether the expanded funding window funds should be used to support funding gaps for existing initiatives (within the spirit of the integrated United Nations programme) or for new initiatives, mostly joint, that would still be relevant to the outcomes
- Different interpretation and application of operational rules and procedures by United Nations agencies and different financial systems of agencies

- Increased operational burdens for United Nations staff
- A short-term increase in transaction costs.

Of the numerous benefits, the following were highlighted:

- Together with national partners, the United Nations agencies developed and implemented joint programmes and activities, funded mostly with funds from the expanded "Delivering as one" funding window, but also with agency-specific and government funds. These joint programmes and initiatives respond directly to some of the most immediate national priorities, and most of them are still ongoing (e.g., Konik area, personal documents for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and domiciled Roma, strengthening good governance in health sector, mental health and green jobs)
- The Government holds the ownership of "Delivering as one", in close cooperation with the United Nations
- Enhanced cooperation with regionally based United Nations organizations; as a result, the number of organizations participating in phase II of the Programme increased from 9 in 2010 to 12 as of 2012
- Initial results seen in coherent joint planning and programming are important for the future of more cohesive, coherent and results-based United Nations delivery
- The United Nations is collectively supporting individual government agencies in addressing complex issues, such as those of internally displaced persons and refugees
- Improved interministerial and inter-United Nations cooperation
- It is still possible to preserve individual mandates and work very coherently at the national level
- The United Nations country team, through its inter-agency Operations Management Team, works on increasing efficiency and effectiveness through improved business practices and common services as well as planning the functioning in the future common premises
- Long-term decrease of transaction costs.

According to the United Nations country team results matrix, the total outlay of funds for the first phase of the integrated United Nations programme amounted to $24.3 million, financed from core and non-core resources. Programming for the second phase (2012-2016) amounts to $51.7 million (it was not clear to the mission how this amount is to be financed, as the core and non-core resources of the United Nations agencies are likely to be insufficient), spread over nine outcomes, three for each of the programme pillars, as follows:

- Social inclusion: with the vision of "a Montenegro society that is progressively free of social exclusion and enjoys a quality of life that allows all individuals and communities to reach their full potential"
- Governance: "a Montenegro that is a democratic society that fully respects and fulfils human rights through the rule of law, government transparency and

accountability ... that is able to meet the political criteria for EU accession and is ready to assume EU membership obligations"

- Sustainable economic development and environmental protection: "a Montenegrin society that translates its constitutional commitment to the concept of an 'ecological state' into practice through achieving balanced and equitable regional economic growth based on sustainable planning and use of natural resources that will provide a high quality of life and long-term economic opportunities for its inhabitants".

Notable examples of the United Nations contributions to the recent reforms have included support in acquiring personal documents for IDPs and domiciled Roma (at risk of statelessness); systematic inclusion of people and children living with disabilities, improving their health care, education and social protection; de-institutionalization of children; enhancing the business environment through creation of green jobs and business clusters; and institution-building and reducing vulnerability to cross-border irregular migration, as well as assisting the country in creating and harmonizing effective legal aid, mediation and juvenile justice systems.

The mission heard consistent expressions of appreciation for the support of the United Nations through "Delivering as one", including from members of parliamentary committees who interact with United Nations programmes; Deputy Ministers who are co-chairs of the working groups that deal with the integrated United Nations programme; the Minister for Foreign Affairs (who had been personally involved in aspects of the United Nations reform concerning "Delivering as one"); the Secretary of the Ministry of Finance; the Minister of Economy; representatives of civil society, many of whom had worked hand in hand with United Nations agencies in supporting legislative changes; and donor representatives. Issues that were highlighted included responsiveness as well as flexibility; systematic dialogue to ensure that targets are met; and a more coherent United Nations team and a more coherent approach. Rigorous planning, follow-up and review of the joint United Nations-government activities have helped to achieve better internal coordination among government units.

Not unlike the case of Albania, while fruitful interactions with parliament have generated an environment of trust and respect for the United Nations, there is no instance where parliament can have an overview of the overall work carried out by the United Nations in Montenegro. The issue was broached by the mission with both the United Nations country team and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the suggestion was made that consideration be given to establishing such a relationship, perhaps in an observer capacity at first. This could take place within the context of the Joint Country Steering Committee. Indications were given to the mission that due consideration would be given to this suggestion.

Joint projects under "Delivering as one"

The mission was invited to visit joint United Nations projects in both Albania and Montenegro. The field visits gave the mission the opportunity to gain a more direct understanding of joint projects and to observe the work of the United Nations on the ground.

In Albania, the mission visited the "Today for the Future" community centre in Durres, a coastal city near Tirana. Durres is one of the four municipalities where the

Government is implementing an integrated, multipronged strategy to combat domestic violence. The project, made possible through United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) funding, brings together the services of different national and local authorities under a single roof to provide integrated support to victims and their children, including shelter, food, education, skills development, counselling, legal services, transportation, outreach and public awareness. A multidisciplinary team provides the necessary support, while overall coordination is ensured by the Director of Social Services of the Municipality of Durres. Training for justice and law enforcement professionals is done through UNDP, for health workers by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and for child protection professionals by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) provides support to public and community authorities in gender-budgeting processes.

In Montenegro, the mission visited the project entitled "Social welfare and childcare system reform: enhancing social inclusion" (funded by the EU), which involves the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education and Sport, UNDP and UNICEF. The project consists of three components: inclusive education, social welfare reform and childcare system reform; it is aimed at facilitating access to vulnerable, socially excluded groups to comprehensive, inclusive and sustainable family and community-based services. The project is supporting the adoption of related laws and standards as well as a fostering strategy; the drafting of local plans in nine municipalities; the development of data collection; the upgrading of capacities of centres for social welfare; the reform of the centres in terms of structures; and the provision of financial and expert support to over 20 social welfare and child protection services.

In both projects, the synergies and complementarities developed among the participating United Nations agencies, which respond to one project design, one management structure and one budget, were evident. This allows for consolidated and cohesive support for government priorities and cost savings in terms of project infrastructure and administration. By bringing together different government actors, the United Nations also contributes to better coordination of internal government mechanisms and brings greater visibility and attention to the priorities that they tackle together.

Aid effectiveness and development partners

It was clear to the mission that the implementation of the "Delivering as one" approach in both Albania and Montenegro has been marked by strong leadership and ownership of the national Governments. This in turn has ensured that the "Delivering as one" programmes are truly reflective of key national priorities; as a corollary, the programmes enjoy credibility and support with respect to all development actors concerned.

While the "Delivering as one" programmes are meant primarily to guide the work of the United Nations in supporting national development efforts, they could also guide the support of other development actors. In this respect, the "One United Nations" funds, created to finance the "Delivering as one" programmes, are built on the notion that they can facilitate the channelling of donor support to those priorities. The reality, however, shows that this is not always the case, and donors have continued to channel their financing directly to the United Nations agencies of

their preference or at best through "soft earmarkings" (indicating a preference for a specific component of the programme).

Similarly, given the multi-year nature of the "Delivering as one" programmes, the expectation is for multi-year financing. Again, experience shows that this is not the case, as donors tend to pledge on a yearly basis, and the "Delivering as one" approach, unfortunately, has not brought about any meaningful change in how the bilateral donors conduct business.

Both senior Government officials and members of the United Nations country teams expressed concern about these practices as they make planning difficult and diminish the efficiency of the programmes. In this regard, greater adherence by donors to the related principles of the Paris Declaration will go a long way in helping governments and the United Nations derive the full benefits of the "Delivering as one" approach.

Conclusions

National ownership presupposes the active involvement of parliament at various levels, including in the formulation of national development strategies and the oversight of aid. All too often, however, parliaments are not involved in a meaningful way in "One United Nations" consultation mechanisms among the Government, development partners and civil society on matters of key importance. These include the elaboration of national development strategies, decisions regarding the content and disbursement of international assistance, and the monitoring of aid effectiveness. Usually, parliaments are not invited to such consultations, and they do not ask to participate.

The limited role of parliaments in aid and international development is a result of various factors. On the one hand, parliament-specific factors, such as limited parliamentary capacities, weak parliamentary independence vis-à-vis the executive, or limited financial autonomy, all create barriers to effective parliamentary participation. On the other, the United Nations itself has often failed to systematically involve parliaments in major processes. All too often, parliaments are viewed as passive recipients of aid and technical assistance, rather than as real partners with a clear mandate to exercise oversight and ensure accountability of development cooperation.

In both Albania and Montenegro, however, this situation can change, and a practice of engagement can be developed and potentially serve as a model for many other countries. The parliaments in both of these countries are dynamic and professional, and they have been greatly involved in the transformation of their nations, in particular by putting in place a comprehensive legislative framework conducive to EU accession.

The United Nations, in turn, enjoys great respect and is considered to be an honest broker and a highly relevant partner. Its greatest contribution to the development of these countries lies not in the number of projects it implements, but rather in its convening power and its capacity to bring in strategic expertise to meet the needs identified by the respective countries. All major political parties support the objective of EU accession, and there is strong cooperation between the Government and the legislature in meeting this national goal. From the perspective of all parties concerned, there is an openness to work together with a view to

identifying appropriate modalities to make the link between Government-parliament-United Nations and other development partners when further developing and implementing the "One United Nations" approach.

Following its mission, the Advisory Group to the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs made the following recommendations:

- A focal point for United Nations affairs should be established within the institution of parliament, which can help enhance parliament's overview of and involvement in United Nations operations at the national level. As the process of EU integration advances, the Committee on Foreign Affairs can also play a more active role in United Nations-related matters
- When reviewing the existing mechanisms for engagement with the United Nations, more functional linkages can be established between the select parliamentary committees, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Office of the Speaker
- Serious consideration should be given to the possibility of bringing in parliament (through a representative) as one of the partners in the Joint Country Steering Committee, or in other mechanisms that have been put in place to ensure coordination, action and monitoring of the integrated United Nations programme at the country level
- In addition to the specialized work taking place at the level of parliamentary committees to adapt national legislation to international (and especially EU) standards, the relevant committees should take a more proactive role in monitoring the implementation of such international commitments. The parliamentary committees on human rights and gender equality, for example, can request national reports before these are submitted to United Nations treaty bodies (such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women or the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council), discuss them in committee and provide feedback to the relevant ministries, and follow progress in the implementation of new recommendations issued by the respective United Nations bodies
- In most cases, programme or project proposals with financial implications for the State budget need to be approved by parliament. The same is not true, however, for national strategies, which most often than not are drafted and approved by the Government. In order to enhance national ownership and build broad political support for such strategies, parliament should require that these be circulated well in advance and brought before it for open debate and endorsement
- The Government should develop and expand the good practice of including members of parliament in national delegations to major international events and conferences (such as world summits or the opening of the annual sessions of the United Nations General Assembly), particularly as they relate to development cooperation and other major global issues
- The parliament itself could initiate more contacts and discussions on issues of mutual interest, and to this end invite relevant stakeholders, including United Nations officials and civil society representatives, to hearings and debates in parliament. Such a practice can potentially help expand the number of

legislative initiatives originating from outside the purely governmental sphere, aimed at responding to community needs

- Regular and robust interaction between parliament and civil society is key to building a legislature that is open, transparent, representative, accountable, effective and well attuned to the needs and expectations of the citizens it was elected to represent. Where such mechanisms do not exist or are not fully developed, parliament should put in place clear and inclusive rules and procedures aimed at enhancing its cooperation with civil society. Such a practice is particularly relevant in the process of deliberations carried out by select parliamentary committees when finalizing draft bills

- The United Nations country teams can endeavour to reach out more systematically to parliamentary leaders and various committees and engage them in policy debates on issues of national interest. As mentioned by one member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, instances in which MPs are invited by the United Nations to such exercises are extremely rare. What needs to develop is a two-way relationship with a more regular and coherent pattern of interaction between the United Nations and parliament at the national level

- It was noted that many United Nations country team members are nationals of the country in which they are serving, which was not the situation observed in other missions to "One United Nations" pilot countries and self-starters. This is considered to be a very valuable practice that the United Nations system should expand and strengthen, as it strengthens the ties between the United Nations and the country where it is operating and brings about a better understanding of the needs and expectations of the country concerned.

- Matters relating to gender equality continue to require special attention, in particular in terms of combating violence against women and promoting the political empowerment of women. While some steps have been taken through the institution of quotas for political party lists, these remain insufficient. Other measures should be considered, including quotas for women's seats in the legislature and the establishment of cross-party women's caucuses in parliament. Should there be an interest, the IPU would be happy to share its acquired expertise in this area, as well as the good practices developed by other countries

- The IPU should circulate this report widely, both among its Member Parliaments and within the broader United Nations community, so as to help garner support and build political momentum in carrying forward the "One United Nations" agenda

- Parliamentarians should enquire out about joint United Nations projects carried out in their countries. As witnessed during the field visits to the joint projects in Albania and Montenegro, pooling the expertise and comparative advantages of various United Nations agencies and programmes can go a long way in maximizing the impact and effectiveness of such interventions in the field. Such good practices should be replicated on a wider scale throughout the world, and parliamentarians can play an important role in building bridges between local communities and the decision-making process at the national level

- Parliaments should encourage their national representatives on the various United Nations agency governing boards to pursue a more coherent approach along the lines of the "Delivering as one" principles, and request more focus and support, both at United Nations Headquarters and in field operations, for serious reform of the United Nations.

In conclusion, the Advisory Group wishes to express its deep gratitude to the Speakers of Parliament of Albania and Montenegro, to the Committee Chairs, MPs and dedicated staff, and to the United Nations resident coordinators and country teams, without whose support this mission would not have been possible.

Meetings in Albania

H.E. Mrs. Jozefina Topalli Çoba, Speaker of the Parliament of Albania

Foreign Policy Committee

Mr. Fatos Beja, Committee Chair

Mr. Namik Dokle, Deputy Speaker of Parliament

Ms. Arta Dade, Member, former Minister for Foreign Affairs

Ms. Lajla Pernaska, Member

Ms. Oita Xhacka, Member

Mr. Kastriot Islami, Member

Mr. Fatbardh Kadilli, Member

Mr. Florion Mima, Member

European Integration Committee

Mr. Ditmir Bushati, Committee Chair

Ms. Arenca Trashani, Member

Ms. Raymonda Bulku, Member

Mr. Sherefedin Shehu, Member

Mr. Taulant Balla, Member

Mr. Marko Bello, Member

Other parliamentary select committees

Mr. Viktor Gumi, Committee on Legal Issues, Administration and Human Rights

Ms. Arenca Trashani, European Integration Committee

Mr. Et'hem Ruka, Chair, Committee on Labour, Social Issues and Health

Mr. Sybi Hida, Economy and Finance Committee

Government officials

Ms. Valbona Kuko, Director, Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination, Council of Ministers

Mr. Gazmend Turdiu, Secretary-General, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Mr. Alfred Rushaj, Minister of Finance

Ms. Arjana Dyrimishi, Director General for Macroeconomic and Fiscal Policies, Ministry of Finance

United Nations country team

Ms. Semia Tapia, United Nations Resident Coordinator a.i. and UN-Women Representative

Ms. Yesim Oruc, UNDP Country Director

Mr. Detlef Palm, UNICEF Representative

Mr. Freddy Austly, UNDP Deputy Country Director

Ms. Nora Kushti, United Nations Resident Coordinator Office, Communications Manager

Ms. Bujana Hoti, United Nations Resident Coordinator Office, HIV/AIDS Theme Group Coordinator

Ms. Nynke Kuperus, United Nations Resident Coordinator Office, Results-based Management and Knowledge Management Specialist

Ms. Maylis de Vermeuil, United Nations Volunteers (UNV) Programme Officer

Mr. Hortenc Balla, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representative

Ms. Emira Shkurti, UNDP Programme Manager

Ms. Flora Ismaili, UNFPA

Ms. Teuta Grazhdani, IOM

Development partners

Mr. François Bégeot, Head of Section, Economic Reform and Infrastructure, European Union Delegation of Albania

Ms. Astrid Wein, Head of Coordination Office for Technical Cooperation, Austrian Embassy

Civil society

Ms. Zini Kore, President, Better Care for Children (BKTF)

Ms. Mirela Arqimandriti, Executive Director, Gender Alliance for Development Centre (GADC)

Ms. Monika Kocaqi, Refleksione Association

Ms. Aurela Anastasi, Executive Director, Centre for Legal Civic Initiatives

Mr. Adriatik Hasantari, Roma Active Albania

Ms. Blerta Cani, Executive Director, Albania Disability Rights Foundation (ARDF)

Ms. Ermelinda Mahmutaj, EDEN Centre

Mr. Skender Veliu, Amaro Drom

Ms. Argyrina Jubani, Chair, Albanian Youth Council

Ms. Mirela Muca, Executive Director, Albanian National Centre for Social Studies

Ms. Elira Zaka, Executive Director, Centre for Parliamentary Studies

Ms. Klotilda Ferhati, Association for Integration of Informal Areas

Ms. Edlira Cepani, Equity in Decision-Making

Meetings in Montenegro

H.E. Mr. Ranko Krivokapić, Speaker of the Parliament

Committee on International Relations and European Integration

Mr. Miodrag Vuković, President

Mr. Vasilije Lalošević, Vice-President

Mr. Obrad Mišostanišić, Member

Ms. Valentina Radulović-Šćepanović, Member

Mr. Genci Nimanbegu, Member

Mr. Zeliko Avramović, Member

Ms. Nada Drobnjak, Member

Mr. Suljo Mustafić, Member

Other select parliamentary committees

Mr. Halil Duković, Member of the Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms

Ms. Nada Drobnjak, President of the Committee on Gender Equality

Mr. Neven Gošović, Vice-President of the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare

Mr. Zoran Srzentić, Member of the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Welfare

Mr. Aleksandar Damjanović, President of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget

Mr. Zoran Vukćević, Vice-President of the Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget

Government officials

Mr. Nebojsa Kaludjerović, Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration

Mr. Vladimir Kavarić, Minister of the Economy

Mr. Damir Rasketić, Secretary of the Ministry of Finance

Ms. Ana Krsmanović, Deputy Minister for Central Harmonization of Public Internal Financial Management and Control and Internal Audit (Ministry of Finance)

Ms. Bojana Bosković, Deputy Minister for Financial Systems and Improvement of the Business Environment (Ministry of Finance)

Mr. Andro Drecun, Deputy Minister on International Relations and Climate Change, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism,

Ms. Remzija Ademović, Acting Deputy Minister of Social Welfare and Child Protection, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare

United Nations country team

Mr. Rastislav Vrbensky, United Nations Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative to Montenegro

Mr. Benjamin Perks, UNICEF Representative to Montenegro

Ms. Brita Helleland, UNHCR Representative to Montenegro

Ms. Mina Brajović, Head of Country Office, WHO Montenegro Country Office

Ms. Elisa Tsakiri, Head of Country Office, IOM Montenegro

Ms. Lovita Ramguttee, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative

Ms. Ana Katnić, National Professional Officer, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Project Office in Podgorica

Development partners

Ms. Catherine Knight Sands, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Embassy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Mr. Pius Fischer, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Embassy of Germany

Ms. Dawn Adie-Baird, Operations Manager, Delegation of the European Union in Montenegro

Civil society

Ms. Maja Raićević, Women's Rights Centre

Mr. Marko Sošić, Institute Alternative

Ms. Marina Bauk, Civic Alliance

Ms. Sanja Sišović, CAZAS

Mr. Dordije Brkuljan, Centre for Democratic Transition

Ms. Rajka Cica Perović, Centre for the Rights of the Child

Annex II to the note verbale dated 18 December 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

The institutional and security situation in Mali

Resolution adopted unanimously by the 127th IPU Assembly

(Quebec City, 26 October 2012)

The 127th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Considering the worsening situation of insecurity in the north of the country following the region's occupation since January 2012 by armed terrorist, fundamentalist and separatist groups with links to drug trafficking rings,

Considering the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation resulting therefrom and the numerous human rights violations perpetrated by these groups of terrorists, fundamentalists and separatists, in particular amputations, stoning, murders, rape and other acts of sexual violence as well as theft, pillaging and the destruction of cultural and religious world heritage sites,

Considering the Malian people's attachment to a secular and indivisible Republic of Mali,

Considering that the international community has unanimously condemned the affront to Mali's territorial integrity,

Considering the efforts deployed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations to solve the institutional and security crisis, which is reversing all the development gains made by the Malian people,

Considering:

(a) The presidential statement on Mali endorsed by the 126th IPU Assembly on 5 April 2012,

(b) European Parliament resolution 2012/2603(RSP) of 20 April 2012 on the situation in Mali,

(c) ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly resolution ACP-EU/101-157/A of 30 May 2012,

(d) The ECOWAS Parliament resolution of 8 October 2012 on developments in the process of managing the political and security crisis in the Republic of Mali,

Considering the requests made by the transitional authorities to ECOWAS and the international community for assistance to the Malian armed forces with a view to liberating the north of the country, in particular the request made by the acting President of the Republic to the United Nations Secretary-General for the deployment of an international military force in Mali in accordance with a United Nations Security Council resolution and by virtue of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

Considering similar requests made by ECOWAS and supported by the African Union, the French President and others to the United Nations Secretary-General,

Considering United Nations Security Council resolution 2071 (2012) adopted on 15 October 2012 by virtue of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, with a view to the deployment of an international armed force to restore the territorial integrity of Mali,

Recalling United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) on women, peace and security, in which the Security Council calls for women to be fully involved in all decision-making related to conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding,

Considering the commitment made by the EU to dispatch military instructors to reorganize the national armed forces,

Considering the meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group on Mali, held on 19 October 2012 in Bamako,

1. *Reaffirms* its unreserved attachment to the integrity and unity of Mali, the secular nature of the Republic and the country's national sovereignty, which belongs to the Malian people alone;

2. *Condemns* the serious human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed in the north of the country by armed rebels and groups of terrorists, fundamentalists and separatists, in particular acts of violence against civilians, notably women and children, murders, amputations and stoning, as well as pillaging and the destruction of cultural and religious world heritage sites;

3. *Welcomes* the initiative taken by the acting President of the Republic to seek the support of ECOWAS and the international community in liberating the north of the country;

4. *Congratulates* ECOWAS and the AU on providing support to the Malian people in their fight against terrorism and the groups of rebels and extremists occupying the north of the country;

5. *Welcomes* the commitment made by the EU and the United Nations to help Mali rid itself of the terrorist groups holding sway in the north of the country;

6. *Also welcomes* the commitment and political will clearly expressed by the French President in support of the Malian people's struggle to liberate the north of the country and his endeavours to resolve the unprecedented institutional and security crisis facing the country;

7. *Appeals* to the countries of the subregion to do all they can to maintain calm and security in the Sahel-Saharan belt;

8. *Urges* the transitional authorities in Mali to ensure that women can fully and meaningfully participate in all decision-making processes related to peacebuilding and governance;

9. *Thanks* the countries of the Support and Follow-up Group on Mali for their initiatives to help the Malian armed forces retake the north of the country;

10. *Welcomes* the resolution adopted by the Security Council with a view to sending an international military force to help the national armed forces retake control of the occupied regions in the north of the country;

11. *Urges* the armed forces of Mali to cooperate fully with the international military force to be deployed;

12. *Also urges* the transitional government to do all in its power, in keeping with its road map, to regain control of the north of the country and hold free and fair elections once the crisis has abated;

13. *Expresses* its unreserved support for the strategy presented by the United Nations Secretary-General with a view to mobilizing all agencies, funds and programmes as well as international financial institutions for the Sahel;

14. *Calls on* the international community to lift sanctions and on technical and financial partners to resume cooperation with Mali following the approval of a road map by the AU on 24 October 2012;

15. *Requests* the relevant international organizations as well as donor countries and agencies, in conjunction with non-governmental organizations operating in the region, to provide emergency food aid, drinking water and shelter for Malian refugees and displaced persons and to facilitate the release of hostages;

16. *Entrusts* the IPU with conveying this resolution to all its Members, Associate Members and Observers and other international organizations.

Annex III to the note verbale dated 18 December 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Report of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs

Noted by the 127th IPU Assembly

(Quebec City, 26 October 2012)

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Committee on United Nations Affairs met from 22 to 26 October in Quebec City, Canada, during the 127th IPU Assembly. The United Nations General Assembly resolution on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (resolution A/66/261, adopted by consensus in May 2012) provided the background to the meeting, along with a number of recent United Nations processes.

The Committee's first sitting took the form of a round-table discussion on the topic "Multilateralism and the role of parliamentary diplomacy". The round table brought together representatives from regional parliamentary bodies involved in various ways in international efforts to promote national reconciliation, peacebuilding and conflict prevention. It provided a unique opportunity for the participants to share information and experiences, and to identify the means of making parliamentary diplomacy more coherent and effective.

During the round table, the participants discussed the various aspects of parliamentary diplomacy and its limitations in practice. The limitations include the fact that in many countries foreign policy is traditionally considered to be the prerogative of the executive branch, and parliaments often lack capacity in this domain. It is clear that parliamentary diplomacy will gain ground and recognition only if it brings to the table more innovative thinking or if it complements official diplomatic action. Similarly, parliamentary diplomacy must be made more accountable to citizens and taxpayers, and focus more on results.

The participants found that parliamentary diplomacy is not just about the resolution of disputes, but also about conflict prevention. The soft diplomacy that parliaments are best equipped to carry out can help build trust between countries, shed light on different cultural perspectives, or simply convey information that is not normally available through official channels. Another advantage of parliamentary diplomacy is that it can help ensure continuity in multilateral relations in the face of frequent changes at the helm of government. A common approach on the ground is election monitoring, in which outside parliamentary observers from other countries can help defuse tensions.

At the same time, however, several participants found that the current proliferation of parliamentary assemblies or associations is not problem-free, in particular given the growing overlap in terms of catchment areas and political terms of reference, which needs to be addressed. Regional parliamentary bodies, which are rooted in local cultures, are often best placed to address local disputes. The direct relationship between global and regional parliamentary efforts needs to be strengthened. The sitting therefore concluded that further discussion was required

and that the IPU should take the lead by carrying out a study on existing good practices and convening further consultations with the regional parliamentary organizations, the United Nations and other partners.

To mark United Nations Day (24 October), the Committee's second sitting took the form of a debate on the question "Does the United Nations take democracy seriously enough?". The sitting touched on a number of areas in which the United Nations and the IPU are working together, in particular the rule of law, integrity of elections, and the promotion of good governance and greater transparency in the work of parliaments.

The Committee considered the matter from the perspectives of both the United Nations intergovernmental process and United Nations field operations. In terms of the United Nations political agenda, the concept of democracy lacks a universally agreed definition, and as such it does not figure prominently on the General Assembly agenda. The United Nations decision-making process continues to be flawed, with the voices of the few often prevailing over those of the many. This is particularly in evidence at the Security Council, where reform of membership and veto rights is as urgently required as ever. When it comes to United Nations assistance for emerging democracies or fragile States, a fairly uneven picture emerges, ranging from almost unmitigated success in the case of Timor-Leste to disappointment in Haiti.

Admittedly, since the adoption in 2000 of the Millennium Declaration, United Nations Member States have pledged to uphold some of the main principles of democracy, but more needs to be done to articulate those principles and put them into practice. This contrasts, for example, with the United Nations strong investment in development following the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals. On the other hand, the United Nations has made great strides forward on democracy-related subjects such as human rights and the empowerment of women, with the establishment of the new Human Rights Council and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).

Another recent development was the adoption of the Declaration of the High-level meeting of the General Assembly on the rule of law at the national and international levels, which enshrines the principles of this key pillar of democracy for the first time. The Declaration also formally acknowledges the role of parliaments and of the IPU in support of the rule of law, thus setting the stage for greater cooperation between the two organizations in this area. In this connection, the participants noted the publication of *The Rule of Law: A Guide for Politicians*.

The discussion on the rule of law was followed by a more expansive debate on the importance of free and fair elections as a necessary, although insufficient, condition for democracy. A report by the International Institute for Democracy and Election Assistance (International IDEA) on electoral violence brought home the point that honest and transparent elections foster greater political accountability, support development and contribute to political stability.

In addition, the Committee heard a presentation by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Sunlight Foundation and the Latin American Network for Legislative Transparency on the recently adopted Declaration on Parliamentary Openness. The Declaration is a distillation of the work conducted by parliamentary monitoring organizations on how parliaments ought to become more transparent and

accessible to the public as a way of further developing a culture of democracy. As the Declaration affirms, the information that a parliament produces belongs to the citizens whom it seeks to represent.

The Committee underscored that democracy remains a work in progress for virtually all States and that it takes much more than the work of the United Nations to bring it to fruition. Ultimately, democracy requires a supportive culture that must be constantly nurtured at the national level. Parliamentarians play a pivotal role in this respect, as representatives of citizens and civil society as a whole. Likewise, parliamentarians can do a great deal more to influence the position of Governments and give greater prominence to democracy at the United Nations.

To mark United Nations Day, the Committee also launched the latest IPU Handbook for parliamentarians on supporting nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The Handbook builds on the work conducted in the years following the adoption in 2009 of the landmark IPU resolution entitled "Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and securing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: The role of parliaments". It identifies good practices and model legislation in this area, offering a series of recommendations for further parliamentary action. The Handbook is the result of cooperation with Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) and the World Future Council, and was made possible thanks to a generous contribution from the Swiss Federal Department of Political Affairs.

The Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, the senior adviser to the United Nations High Representative on Disarmament Affairs, the President of the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and the Co-Chair of the PNND Canada Chapter joined the lead authors in presenting the Handbook to the Committee. Several participants, including the Speaker of the parliament of Kazakhstan and prominent legislators from India, New Zealand, Egypt, the Philippines and Costa Rica joined parliamentarians from all regions of the world in calling for determined parliamentary action to make the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world a palpable reality.

On 25 October, the Committee took stock of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, in a sitting entitled "What prospects for sustainable development?". The Committee underscored that the Conference was a disappointment, as it broke no new ground and led to very few new commitments. This was ascribed mostly to a lack of political will and the inability of Governments to tackle certain issues effectively. On the other hand, the Conference also helped return the whole sustainable development agenda to the top of the international agenda. What counts now is what all stakeholders are willing to do both to implement the Conference outcome and to take it to the next level of commitment.

The Committee agreed that the main achievement of the Conference was the mandate that it gave for the establishment of a new generation of sustainable development goals that will replace the current Millennium Development Goals in 2015. The sustainable development goals are intended to apply to both developed and developing countries, providing a set of goals that should synthesize the three pillars of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. The Committee deemed it important for the sustainable development goals to have two clear core

objectives: eradicating poverty and narrowing inequality. It is also crucial that they be fully owned from the start by all stakeholders, including parliamentarians, civil society and the private sector. Most important, the sustainable development goals should come with clear reporting and monitoring mechanisms to assess progress. The main lesson learned from the Millennium Development Goals is that progress is possible when there is ownership and leadership, and when communities are empowered.

The overarching challenge of the sustainable development goals will be to build bridges between nature and people at a time when the world population is growing and in a context of limited natural resources. The post-Conference agenda must aim at rethinking growth in terms of human well-being, not just material expansion. The Committee also agreed that a human rights perspective will need to be embedded in future discussions about the post-2015 development framework, including the right to food and new rights such as the right to water, which provide useful entry points for pursuing all three pillars of sustainability in an integrated manner. Upholding the right to food implies a discussion of power relations and the concentration of power in a few hands, as reflected in the current wave of land-grabbing in many countries around the world. Food security will be ensured only if smallholders, especially women, receive more proactive support.

Going forward, parliaments will have a critical role to play in advancing the post-Conference agenda in tandem with the global process led by the United Nations. They should play an active part in the new United Nations Consultative Forum, created in Rio de Janeiro as a multi-stakeholder platform. They should also provide input at an early stage for the new General Assembly Open Working Group on sustainable development goals and the Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The place to begin is at the national level, where the United Nations is also conducting consultations that will feed into the global intergovernmental process. A good example has been set by Parliament in the United Kingdom, which is already conducting hearings on the new development framework.

The Committee's last sitting examined the progress made and obstacles encountered in the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, five years after its adoption in 2007. The Declaration sets minimum standards for the survival, well-being and dignity of indigenous peoples. The participants noted positive developments, such as the adoption of a national plan of action in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for implementing the Declaration, and the Declaration's incorporation into the national law of the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Overall, however, there remains a wide gap between the standards and their implementation.

The participants enquired about good practices for obtaining the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples to legislative and administrative measures affecting them, a principle enshrined in the Declaration. Good practices are in fact rare — many States are struggling to engage effectively with indigenous peoples, if they seek to do so at all. This is clearly an issue for parliaments to take up.

The United Nations will convene the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, in September 2014. The preparatory resolution invites stakeholders, including parliamentarians, to participate in this process. The way in which Governments will engage with parliaments, indigenous peoples and others in the

preparation of the World Conference remains largely to be determined, but parliaments have an opportunity to engage their Governments and hold them to account.

Several people noted the low level of participation at this sitting. They underlined that everybody should be concerned by indigenous rights. Indigenous concerns should be shared more broadly, among parliamentarians and in society in general. In the words of an indigenous parliamentarian from New Zealand, the realization of indigenous peoples' rights is "a journey, for indigenous and non-indigenous, hand in hand".

At the close of its annual meeting, the Committee pledged to redouble its efforts to enhance interaction between the United Nations, parliaments and the IPU. The present report will be circulated among IPU member Parliaments and in the broader United Nations community, with a view to articulating a robust programme of work for the years ahead.

Annex IV to the note verbale dated 18 December 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Citizenship, identity and linguistic and cultural diversity in a globalized world

Quebec City Declaration

Adopted by the 127th IPU Assembly

(Quebec City, 26 October 2012)

1. We, members of parliament gathering in Quebec City on the occasion of the 127th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, firmly uphold cultural, linguistic, ethnic, racial, political and religious diversity as a global value which should be celebrated, respected, encouraged and protected within and among all societies and civilizations.

2. We are convinced that a diversity of ideas, values, beliefs, languages and cultural expressions among peoples and civilizations enriches our outlook and experiences at the national, regional and international levels.

3. We affirm our aspiration to attain harmony and unity in our diversity and the reconciliation of human cultures. We believe that a world where people with their differences co-exist is possible, one where there is awareness of differential solidarity and where a dialogue of civilizations is encouraged. Such a world, which depends on our mutual understanding and acceptance, would be a source of progress for humanity and would lead to the well-being of our global society.

4. All individuals must be allowed the full enjoyment of their equal and inalienable rights recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights and humanitarian law treaties and standards. Limitations or restrictions on any of these rights must be consistent with international law, necessary and proportionate. They should not lead to any discrimination whatsoever based on culture, race, colour, language, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation or political affiliation.

5. States thus have an obligation to respect, protect, fulfil and promote the interconnected civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of all individuals. In order to prevent uniformity, each State, together with civil society, must play its role in developing and implementing cultural policies, including by providing the requisite means and creating an enabling environment.

6. We affirm the importance of balancing respect for diversity with social inclusiveness and cohesion as a means of building trust within and among societies and as a sine qua non for progress, prosperity and a high quality of life. Differences of language, culture, ethnicity, religion, belief, race and colour are evident in many societies, with no single experience common to all others. In accordance with international law and standards, each society's efforts to guarantee these rights will reflect its historical, political, economic and social circumstances. The variety of experiences with diversity among societies and civilizations makes it possible to

have a constructive exchange of best practices and innovative ideas about the promotion of inclusiveness while respecting diversity.

7. The diversity of our societies and civilizations is a prominent feature of our ever more globalized and interconnected world. People and societies are in closer and more frequent contact because of many forces, such as past and recent migration trends, technological advances in communication and transportation and new and more integrated patterns of regional and global trade. These developments have resulted in greater awareness of different ideas and values, as well as in closer ties between various communities and their countries of origin.

8. In a world of deepening global and regional linkages and interdependence, States, international organizations and civil society are increasingly cooperating to mitigate the consequences of economic distress, natural disasters and conflicts, events which we believe should not serve as pretexts for restricting diversity or violating fundamental human rights.

9. Diversity in a globalized world can facilitate the efforts of States and national parliaments to navigate the complexities of the twenty-first century by offering opportunities to share different perspectives and ideas on common issues. In so doing, we enhance our knowledge and innovation, develop our shared human capital, promote mutual awareness and understanding of differences and commonalities and enable opportunities for peace and prosperity.

10. We are concerned and deeply regret that alienation, intolerance, distrust, racism, aggressive nationalism, ethnocentrism and xenophobia against groups and individuals belonging to religious, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, racial and other communities, among other disturbing forms of discrimination and prejudice, have persisted.

11. While reaffirming our commitment to the right to freedom of thought, opinion and expression, we strongly and unequivocally condemn all acts which intimidate and incite to extremism, radicalization, hatred, racism, xenophobia and violence. We reiterate that under no circumstances can violent reactions be justified. Exchanges, education and dialogue that promote peaceful and lawful expressions of anger over grievances, that build mutual respect, trust and confidence on the basis of shared responsibility and international law and standards and that contribute to peace and security should be encouraged and sustained.

12. We are alarmed by the deterioration of the economic situation in many parts of the world, which threatens the cohesion of many societies by generating forms of exclusion likely to fuel social tensions and manifestations of xenophobia.

13. We stress that the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions presuppose the recognition of equal dignity of and respect for all cultures, including the cultures of persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples.

14. We affirm that indigenous peoples are full-fledged and equal members of our societies. We are deeply concerned that indigenous peoples, especially indigenous women, are particularly susceptible to political, economic and social marginalization, intolerance and prejudice, which undermine their representation and participation in decisions affecting their well-being, advancement and contributions to society.

15. We also affirm that gender equality and respect for diversity are fundamentally linked and we deplore the fact that women belonging to racial, religious, linguistic, cultural and ethnic minorities are particularly vulnerable to political, economic and social alienation and discrimination. Recalling United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the 1995 Beijing Declaration issued by the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, we recognize the role that women can play in promoting mutual understanding, tolerance and peaceful relations in diverse societies as equal decision makers and participants in the political sphere in order to build more stable, inclusive and equitable societies. We emphasize that non-discriminatory and affirmative action measures are needed not only to pave the way to women's full participation but also to empower them in order to achieve such goals.

16. As parliamentarians, we are mindful that representation in and access to institutions of authority and decision-making positions — both in the public and private spheres — and opportunities for effective political, economic and social participation are important elements of inclusion, tolerance, mutual respect and stability in diverse societies. These are enhanced through respect for and fulfilment of international human rights obligations and commitments, inter alia, by:

- Holding free and fair elections with universal and equal voting rights for all citizens;
- Upholding the rule of law, respecting the equality of all persons before the law and their entitlement to the equal protection of the law;
- Ensuring freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, and freedom of association, which are necessary to promote an active and engaged civil society and a network of global citizens;
- Guaranteeing all persons full respect of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights;
- Explicitly prohibiting discrimination of any kind; and
- Providing a legal framework that enshrines and protects these rights and values.

17. Intercultural dialogue, as a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, plays an important role in enhancing knowledge and awareness of differences and commonalities among groups, leading to acceptance of diversity as a source of enrichment, tolerance and inclusiveness. In this context, we stress the importance of justice and dialogue in societies emerging from crisis and conflict in order to promote reconciliation and peaceful coexistence with due recognition of national sovereignty.

18. Citizenship affords persons opportunities for participating in political and decision-making processes. It is thus instrumental in protecting vulnerable members of diverse societies. It is also an important tool by which disparate elements in a State can share a civic identity that exists simultaneously with, not at the expense of, other identities. Accordingly, statelessness must be reduced and prevented with the assistance of the international community. In particular, solutions for stateless

peoples, including persons of indigenous origin and migrant children, need to be found in accordance with national laws.

19. Interactions with the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government are vital to fostering the inclusion, representation and participation of members of diversity groups. In this context, legislation and policies governing the language(s) of such interactions can contribute to respect for diversity. Accessible and effective development and training in official language(s) will also be beneficial. Moreover, persons belonging to linguistic minorities should not be denied the right to use their own language or to gain access to minority-language education.

20. Non-discriminatory access to quality education and training is necessary to promote knowledge about civic rights and duties and awareness and tolerance of other cultures and civilizations, thereby facilitating political, economic and social participation and inclusiveness of marginalized groups. Youth who might otherwise be susceptible to alienation, radicalization and extremist ideologies benefit particularly from these measures and are more likely to contribute politically, economically and socially to society at large.

21. Natural resources are vital to the prosperity of society. In countries with a diverse population, the development of these resources must take duly into account the diversity of values and beliefs of all societal groups, in particular those of indigenous peoples and local communities, thus recognizing the importance of natural resources and ancestral lands to their identity. Accordingly, natural resource development must be managed responsibly in order to ensure that the traditions and interests of these groups are preserved for future generations.

The role of parliaments in protecting diversity at the national level

22. We call on our parliaments and their members to use all means available to them to protect and celebrate diversity within and among their societies as a global value. These means include, but are not limited to, effective measures to:

(a) Adopt and implement international conventions outlining basic human rights, civil, economic and social rights as well as applicable instruments that recognize and promote efforts to maintain cultural differences and provide special rights to ethnic or linguistic minorities, such as promoting their cultures and the use of their languages in education and through the media;

(b) Enact legislation and adopt political measures designed to strengthen acceptance of diversity among members of different social communities and to nurture understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and friendship among human beings;

(c) Adopt and implement laws, in particular in the area of civil rights, that provide for and enhance the effective participation of diverse groups in decision-making processes, including in parliament;

(d) Prevent, combat and eliminate discrimination; repeal any existing discriminatory laws; and enact legislation to counter the dissemination, in the media and via the Internet, of hate messages;

(e) Heighten public awareness of the role of parliaments in dealing with cultural diversity governance at the national level, notably by celebrating the United

Nations International Day for Diversity (21 May), participating in the United Nations World Faith Harmony Week (first week of February) or participating in the global campaign "Do one thing for diversity";

(f) Promote policies and legislation that favour diversity as a driving force for innovation, prosperity and development at the local and national levels;

(g) Promote policies and legislation that protect and guarantee respect for the full and equal enjoyment of fundamental human rights and freedoms by all members of society;

(h) Ensure that the national legal framework provides effective access to legal protection and remedies for individuals experiencing discrimination;

(i) Ensure access to justice and strengthen the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, which is entrusted with enforcing and ensuring respect for the legal protections related to non-discrimination; and

(j) Mainstream a gender perspective into all of the above-mentioned measures and, in particular, strengthen the representation of women in parliament.

23. We urge our parliaments to promote the education of children and youth in diversity and plurality in society.

24. We also call on our parliaments to take effective action in the area of intercultural dialogue, namely, to:

(a) Establish and support intercultural dialogue and cooperation involving Governments, parliaments and parliamentarians, civil society and groups representing society's diversity, to increase awareness of the new challenges, expectations and concerns of a culturally diverse population, notably by organizing annual public hearings to encourage active public participation;

(b) Adopt and implement national legislation, policies or strategies for intercultural dialogue as part of a framework that integrates different policy fields, namely, education, youth and sports programmes, and media and culture, which, inter alia, provide the basis for understanding and respecting diversity, facilitate practical experience with intercultural dialogue, connect different value systems and challenge established views; and

(c) Engage and consult with civil society and groups representing cultural, religious, racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity when developing legislation and policies that are of direct concern to them.

The role of parliaments in international efforts to protect diversity

25. We emphasize the contribution of parliaments to the peaceful coexistence of ethnic, cultural, racial, linguistic and religious groups, minorities, local communities and indigenous peoples and to international reconciliation.

26. We recall the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and

Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and other regional and international instruments that recognize and establish standards for the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the civil, economic, political, social and cultural spheres.

27. We urge our parliaments to encourage States that have not yet done so to ratify and sign international and regional agreements that aim to combat incitement to acts of violence, discrimination and hatred, and to propose international parliamentary initiatives in cooperation with the United Nations to promote this Declaration.

28. We support the efforts of States, relevant bodies within the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations, parliaments and interparliamentary organizations, civil society and the media to develop a culture of peace and promote understanding and tolerance among human beings. We encourage them to pursue such efforts, including by promoting interfaith and intercultural interaction within and among societies, inter alia, through congresses, conferences, seminars, workshops and research work.

29. We reiterate our commitment to the 2005 World Summit Outcome, which acknowledges the importance of respect for and understanding of religious and cultural diversity throughout the world. We commend the work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in improving understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions, and helping to counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism.

30. We reaffirm our support for the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which entered into force on 18 March 2007, and invite national parliaments and parliamentarians to take an active part in the programmes of the United Nations and UNESCO on dialogue among civilizations and cultures and to encourage their Governments to contribute to such programmes.

31. We recall the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures proclaimed in 2010 by the United Nations General Assembly and consider it an important vehicle for promoting mutual awareness and understanding and celebrating the diversity of societies and civilizations.

32. We call on international and regional organizations, interparliamentary associations, States and national parliaments to develop tools that enable legislation to protect the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities. We commend the joint efforts of the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNDP, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the IPU in developing a Handbook on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We encourage parliaments and States to consult the Handbook for practical ideas and good practices related to improving the situation of indigenous peoples and parliaments throughout the world.

33. We reaffirm the significant role of the IPU in working towards peace and cooperation among peoples, enhancing interaction between societies and peoples and promoting dialogue among different civilizations and cultures.

34. We recall our commitments as affirmed in the following resolutions: "Migration and development", adopted at the 113th IPU Assembly (Geneva, 2005), "Ensuring respect for and peaceful coexistence between all religious communities and beliefs in a globalized world", adopted at the 116th IPU Assembly (Nusa Dua, 2007), "Promoting diversity and equal rights for all through universal democratic and electoral standards", adopted at the 116th IPU Assembly (Nusa Dua, 2007), "Migrant workers, people trafficking, xenophobia and human rights", adopted at the 118th IPU Assembly (Cape Town, 2008), and the Chiapas Declaration, adopted at the International Parliamentary Conference on the theme "Parliaments, minorities and indigenous peoples: Effective participation in politics" (Chiapas, Mexico, 2010).

35. We call on the IPU to strengthen its relationship with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and strengthen its role in fostering interparliamentary exchange of information and experience in respect of the implementation of effective measures concerning the protection of diversity within and across civilizations.

36. We also call on the IPU and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, as well as any other relevant partners, to share information on national approaches, policies and strategies on intercultural dialogue and national legal frameworks upon which intercultural dialogue and cooperation depend.

37. We urge our parliaments and parliamentarians to strengthen parliamentary dialogue among civilizations and cultures, within the framework of the IPU and the various interparliamentary assemblies in which they participate, and through bilateral initiatives such as the establishment of interparliamentary friendship groups.

38. We recommend that the IPU and national parliaments, the United Nations, UNESCO and other relevant organizations collaborate to implement the provisions of this Declaration.

Annex V to the note verbale dated 18 December 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments

Adopted by the 127th IPU Assembly

(Quebec City, 26 October 2012)

The 127th IPU Assembly,

Having before it the Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments,

Considering that the document was drawn up following an extensive process of consultation with IPU Members,

Mindful that the document resulting from this process proposes concrete solutions to situations common to all countries while offering a wide range of options responding to individual situations — national and regional — and that it represents a common basis for the advancement of gender-sensitive parliaments in all countries,

1. *Decides* to adopt the Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments;

2. *Strongly encourages* Members to bring this Plan of Action to the attention of their parliaments and Governments, disseminate it as widely as possible and implement it at the national level;

3. *Requests* the IPU Secretary-General to ensure that this document is circulated as widely as possible at the international level and to promote its implementation at the national level.

Preamble

Democracy requires constant evaluation and reassessment. In the twentieth century, one of the greatest changes to democracy around the world was the inclusion of increasing numbers of women, both as voters and as members of parliament.

In parallel, gender equality and women's empowerment have become an integral part of the international political and development agenda, recognized as being at the heart of progress towards, and achievement of, the Millennium Development Goals. Gender equality means that women and men enjoy full and equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Gender equality and women's empowerment are human rights, requiring political and legal expression. Countries must promote, respect and protect women's human rights, including gender equality.

Progress towards these goals requires direct action. While specific actions may need to take into account the individual cultural, social and religious context of parliaments around the world, progress essentially requires a widespread change in attitudes and perceptions.

Parliaments are well placed to champion the goal of gender equality. Parliaments aim to reflect society, and so they must reflect the changing dynamics of their electorates.

A gender-sensitive parliament is a parliament that responds to the needs and interests of both men and women in its composition, structures, operations, methods and work. Gender-sensitive parliaments remove the barriers to women's full participation and offer a positive example or model to society at large. They ensure that their operations and resources are used effectively towards promoting gender equality.

A gender-sensitive parliament is one in which there are no barriers — substantive, structural or cultural — to women's full participation and to equality between its men and women members and staff. It is not only a place where women *can* work, but also one where women *want* to work and contribute. A gender-sensitive parliament sets a positive example by promoting gender equality and women's empowerment among society both nationally and internationally.

A gender-sensitive parliament is therefore a modern parliament; one that addresses and reflects the equality demands of a modern society. Ultimately, it is a parliament that is more efficient, effective and legitimate.

Objectives

This Plan of Action is designed to support parliaments in their efforts to become more gender-sensitive. It presents a broad range of strategies in seven action areas that can be implemented by all parliaments, irrespective of the number of women members.

Parliaments are called upon to take ownership of this Plan of Action and to implement any or all of the Plan's strategies at the national level by setting concrete objectives, actions and deadlines suited to their national context. They are also called upon to regularly monitor and evaluate their progress towards the goal of gender sensitivity.

A gender-sensitive parliament responds to the needs and interests of both men and women in its structures, operations, methods and work.

A gender-sensitive parliament is one that:

1. Promotes and achieves equality in numbers of women and men across all of its bodies and internal structures.
2. Develops a gender equality policy framework suited to its own national parliamentary context.
3. Mainstreams gender equality throughout all of its work.
4. Fosters an internal culture that respects women's rights, promotes gender equality and responds to the needs and realities of MPs — men and women — to balance work and family responsibilities.
5. Acknowledges and builds on the contribution made by its men members who pursue and advocate for gender equality.

6. Encourages political parties to take a proactive role in the promotion and achievement of gender equality.

7. Equips its parliamentary staff with the capacity and resources to promote gender equality, actively encourages the recruitment and retention of women to senior positions, and ensures that gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the work of the parliamentary administration.

* * *

Key action areas of the Plan

Action area 1: Increase the number of women in parliament and achieve equality in participation

Equality of participation can be both a catalyst for implementing gender-sensitive changes and an important outcome of successful gender-sensitive changes.

a. Access to parliament

While the representation of women in parliaments has increased slowly since the mid-twentieth century, it still does not match women's broader representation in society.

Increasing access to parliament through gender-sensitive changes will help increase the number of women parliamentarians, which can in turn prompt the further implementation of the principles of gender sensitivity.

To redress this imbalance, parliaments should implement one or more of the following measures:

- In line with their national context, adopt special measures to ensure that higher numbers of women are selected by parties to run in "winnable" seats, and propose amendments to electoral laws and national constitutions that provide for reserved seats.
- Condemn acts of violence against women candidates and parliamentarians and adopt legal and practical measures to prevent and punish such acts.
- Conduct awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of women's representation in parliament.
- Support mentorship programmes and promote women parliamentarians as role models through parliament's communications tools and in the media.
- Facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices among parliamentarians through study tours to other parliaments in the region and internationally.

b. Achieving equality in positions and roles

While the number of women in parliament is important, it is equally important to have women in positions of parliamentary leadership.

The principles of gender-sensitive parliaments can be advanced if women occupy leadership positions as parliamentarians and as key members of parliamentary staff, as they are then in a position to influence policy directions,

change parliamentary procedure and practices, serve as role models to other women and provide a different perspective in debates.

To improve the leadership status of women and achieve greater gender equality in leadership positions, parliaments should implement one or more of the following measures:

- Adopt affirmative action measures and amend the internal rules so as to give preference to women over men for parliamentary positions (including committee Chairs and leadership positions in the Bureau or Board) in cases where qualifications are equal or commensurate with their representation in the parliament.
- Rotate positions of parliamentary leadership between men and women over a period of time.
- Introduce dual leadership for parliamentary structures, where possible, through the appointment of a man and a woman.
- Encourage the proportional and equitable distribution of women parliamentarians across all committees, not just those relating to women, children, gender, families, health and education.
- Encourage persons in leadership positions to broaden the criteria used to evaluate the relevance of women's and men's experience before entering politics.

Action area 2: Strengthen gender equality legislation and policy

Parliaments can become more gender-sensitive by implementing legislation and policies that support the principles of gender equality. The introduction of gender equality and gender mainstreaming legislation can be an effective catalyst for social and cultural change in attitudes towards gender equality.

Parliaments can also serve as a model for society by championing gender equality through the implementation of gender-sensitive strategic policies, action plans and operational and supporting policies.

a. National legislation

With the goal of promoting change in social and cultural attitudes towards gender equality, parliaments should:

- Enact laws that promote and protect gender equality; where gender equality laws were enacted but have become outdated or were enacted more than 10 years ago, parliaments should review such legislation to include gender mainstreaming frameworks and mechanisms for monitoring and enforcing implementation.

With the aim of guaranteeing a legislative mandate for gender mainstreaming, parliaments should:

- Consider introducing a law and/or mechanisms that require all government policy and legislation to be reviewed and assessed for their gender impact and compliance with the State's obligations under relevant international conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination against Women, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights.

b. Parliament's strategic policies and action plans

In order to serve as leaders and role models for championing gender equality in society, parliaments should:

- Develop a gender equality policy that sets out:
  - The rationale and strategic direction for implementing measures contained in this Plan of Action,
  - Concrete actions the parliament will take to address gender equality within a specific time frame, and
  - Indicators to measure progress that are monitored regularly through an appropriate parliamentary oversight mechanism.
- Ensure that the parliament's budget is gender-sensitive and that accountability measures are in place to monitor progress.

c. Operational and supporting policies of the parliament

i. Develop media and communications policies

To ensure that the importance of promoting gender equality is well understood and given the utmost visibility, parliament should:

- Develop a gender communications strategy that identifies target audiences, key messages, methods and time frames.
- Showcase and publicize their gender equality activities and outcomes in the media, or through the parliament's own communication channels, including its website.

ii. Develop anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies

To ensure that all parliamentarians and parliamentary staff work in an environment free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, parliament should:

- Introduce a code of conduct that requires all parliamentarians to be respectful and courteous and penalizes any language and behaviour that is considered sexist.
- Develop and implement anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies in line with national legislation applicable to all parliamentarians and parliamentary staff, including the establishment of an independent body to which complaints can be submitted and addressed.
- Ensure that the language used in all official documents, including standing orders, is gender-sensitive (e.g., does not refer to members using the masculine pronoun "he" and uses "Chairperson" or "Chair" rather than "Chairman").

Action area 3: Mainstream gender equality throughout all parliamentary work

Gender inequality can be tackled effectively only if policies in all areas are designed in such a way as to address the specific concerns, needs and constraints of both women and men while building on their respective capacities and contributions.

The mainstreaming of gender considerations into a parliament's work is an effective gender-sensitive change, as gender mainstreaming is a process that recognizes the economic, social, political and legal differences that exist between women and men.

a. Committing to gender mainstreaming

Parliaments should demonstrate their commitment to gender mainstreaming by showcasing and creating opportunities to incorporate a gender dimension into all areas of their work. In this respect, they should:

- Foster debates on legislation and budgets, including the implications of such bills and expenditure allocations for women and men, girls and boys (e.g., allocate time or hold a special session to debate the allocations and expenditure for gender equality in the budget).
- Develop clear gender-based legislative assessment guidelines or toolkits (e.g., a gender-based checklist for all pieces of legislation, including the budget).
- Allocate time in the order of business for special debates on gender equality or gender-specific questioning of ministers, in which both men and women are encouraged to participate.
- Ensure that committees investigating gender equality concerns have sufficient time and resources (including staff with gender expertise) to fulfil their mandate, an opportunity to report back to the plenary on their work and recommendations as well as the same powers and responsibilities as any other parliamentary committee (e.g., call for written evidence, hear from witnesses and ministers and report on findings and recommendations).
- Ensure that there is a formal mechanism by which the body that is tasked with gender mainstreaming — be it an informal women's caucus or a dedicated parliamentary committee — can report on its studies and examination of legislation to the key political organs of the parliament. Where reports have not been presented, reasons should be given.

b. Establishing gender mainstreaming structures and mechanisms

Gender mainstreaming involves, in part, the following activities: obtaining gender-disaggregated data and qualitative information on the situation of men and women; conducting a gender analysis which highlights the differences between and among women, men, girls and boys in terms of their relative distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints and power in a given context; and instituting gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including the establishment of indicators to gauge the extent to which gender equality objectives are met and changes in gender relations are achieved.

Parliaments should adopt one or more of the following mechanisms that are best suited to their own context:

- A dedicated parliamentary committee on gender equality entrusted with reviewing government policies, legislation and budgets from a gender perspective, where committee members question a broad range of groups and individuals, including public agencies, academics and private organizations, about their views on the effectiveness of government programmes and activities, and where strong links are forged between the committee and national women's machineries, civil society organizations (CSOs), research institutes and universities.
- Mainstreaming gender throughout all parliamentary committees, so that all committee members — men and women — are mandated to address the gender implications of the policy, legislative and budgetary matters under their consideration as appropriate, supported by parliamentary research staff with gender expertise.
- A women's parliamentary caucus with a special remit for gender equality concerns, composed of women (and men, if desired) working on a commonly agreed agenda. An effective caucus relies on strong links with national women's machineries, CSOs and research institutes and universities.
- A Speaker's reference group on gender equality composed of men and women parliamentarians from across the political spectrum, which reports to the Speaker directly and sets the parliament's gender equality direction and agenda.
- Technical research units on gender equality or library/research staff with gender expertise who have access to up-to-date information, books, computers and online databases and who can assist with gender-based analyses.

Action area 4: Institute or improve gender-sensitive infrastructure and parliamentary culture

Parliaments are like any other workplace and, as such, should serve as a model for society by upholding the principles of gender sensitivity through the provision of family-friendly policies and infrastructure, and the implementation of policies related to the prevention of discrimination and harassment, and policies on the equitable distribution of parliamentary resources and facilities.

a. Facilitating a work-family balance

To ensure that workplace policies and infrastructure reflect the contemporary work and family realities facing men and women parliamentarians, and in recognition of the fact that women worldwide continue to spend a disproportionate amount of time on caregiving, parliaments should:

- Rearrange their sitting hours (e.g., by establishing compressed sitting weeks, creating schedules that start early, avoiding late voting, and aligning sitting times with the school calendar) so that parliamentarians can return to their electorates and spend more time with their families.

- Allocate space in the parliamentary building for a childcare centre and a family room so that parliamentarians can be close to their children during sittings.
- Ensure that parliamentarians — both men and women — are entitled to parental leave on the birth of their children.
- Consider alternatives where long-term parental leave cannot be implemented, such as accepting parental leave as a legitimate reason for missing a sitting day, in addition to that of "official business".
- Give parliamentarians who are still breastfeeding the opportunity to use a proxy vote or vote pairing so that they need not attend the sitting.

b. Fostering a work culture free of discrimination and harassment

To ensure a safe, respectful, non-discriminatory and harassment-free workplace, parliaments should:

- Conduct a gender-based analysis of parliamentary rituals, dress codes, forms of address and commonly used language, conventions and rules.
- Provide gender-awareness training seminars for all members of parliament and ensure that induction for new members is gender-sensitive. This could take the form of mentoring for new women parliamentarians, pairing women with experienced parliamentarians (men or women) or presentations by senior women parliamentarians on strategies to cope in the parliamentary environment.

c. Providing equitable resources and facilities

To ensure that the parliamentary precinct facilities are suited to the needs of men and women and that resources are equitably distributed, parliaments should:

- Conduct a gender assessment of the facilities provided to all parliamentarians.
- Ensure that allowances and parliamentary travel entitlements are provided to parliamentarians equitably and transparently and that parliamentary delegations are gender-balanced, when possible.

Action area 5: Ensure that responsibility for gender equality is shared by all parliamentarians — men and women

The realization of a gender-sensitive parliament, based on the ultimate goal of gender equality in all its structures, methods and work, will not take place without the support and involvement of men parliamentarians. Changing social values and heightening gender awareness among men have resulted in stronger partnerships between men and women on gender equality.

Parliaments should adopt strategies that promote such partnerships, including by:

- Promoting the co-sponsorship of gender equality legislation by a man and a woman parliamentarian.
- Appointing a man and a woman parliamentarian as co-chairs and/or vice-chairs of a gender equality committee.

- Establishing committee inquiries into gender policy issues of interest to men.
- Encouraging the inclusion of men in parliamentary events pertaining to the recognition of gender-related issues, such as International Women's Day and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.
- Ensuring gender balance on study tours and in international delegations on gender equality or gender mainstreaming.
- Providing gender-sensitive training programmes for men parliamentarians.

Action area 6: Encourage political parties to be champions of gender equality

Political parties are often the dominant form of political organization and the mechanism through which women and men pursue a legislative agenda with respect to the achievement of gender equality.

Parliaments should encourage political parties to adopt the following gender-sensitive measures:

a. Increase the number of women in their ranks by:

- Considering special temporary measures to promote the entry and retention of women in parliament.
- Promoting men and women equally to all leadership positions in their executive bodies.
- Endorsing training and mentoring schemes that pair elected parliamentarians with eligible women interested in running for election, including courses on various aspects of election campaigns and training in media relations.
- Establishing support networks for women candidates at elections and for elected women with the goal of improving both recruitment and retention rates.

b. Institute gender-sensitive meeting arrangements and work practices by:

- Setting meeting times that do not coincide with other family responsibilities.
- Respecting the expected duration of meetings so that other family commitments can be kept.

c. Develop gender mainstreaming mechanisms by:

- Developing an overarching gender equality plan with clear gender mainstreaming strategies and dedicated party committees to oversee, monitor and evaluate their implementation.
- Encouraging political parties to use gender-sensitive language in their documents.

d. Equitably allocate parliamentary committee positions among men and women by:

- Encouraging parties to adopt a transparent method of appointing members to committees and to leadership positions on those committees in a way that better matches members' diverse abilities, work experience and preferences

regarding committee assignments. Parties could also give preference to women over men in cases where qualifications are equal.

Action area 7: Enhance the gender sensitivity of, and gender equality among, parliamentary staff

Gender-sensitive parliaments are champions of gender equality, not only for their members, but also for the many staff who support them. Parliamentary administrations need to review their workplace culture and infrastructure, and act to ensure that all staff are able to support parliament in achieving its gender equality goals. In this respect, parliaments and their administration should:

- Develop and implement anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies applicable for all parliamentary staff, including the establishment of an independent body to address complaints.
- Assess the number and seniority of women in the parliamentary administration.
- Establish a committee or entrust an existing one with the task of examining the possible implementation of affirmative action policies that give preference to women over men for parliamentary positions in cases where qualifications are equal and where women are inadequately represented at leadership levels.
- Provide gender-awareness training seminars for all parliamentary staff to explain the principles of gender equality and why a gender-sensitive parliament benefits everyone.
- Build the capacity of parliamentary staff to conduct gender-based analyses of legislation, budgets and policies.

* * *

Implementation of this Plan of Action

Initiate and implement gender sensitive reform in parliament

Gender sensitivity is a goal towards which all parliaments must strive. To achieve this goal, parliaments should design a process suited to their national situations that should include the following core elements:

a. Evaluation

Parliaments interested in evaluating their level of gender sensitivity should:

- Use the IPU gender-sensitive self-assessment toolkit. The purpose of the self-assessment is not to rank parliaments but rather to help parliaments identify their strengths and weaknesses against international best practices. The toolkit provides a framework for discussion among members of parliament. The method involves answering questions about the way gender equality is incorporated into the culture and work of the parliament.
- Use their own internal structures to evaluate their level of gender sensitivity, such as an audit, or other business review or committee. In this case, external stakeholders such as civil society groups, national women's machineries and research institutes could be invited to share their opinions on the state of

gender sensitivity with the committee, and draw up recommendations for change. The committee would then present its own conclusions and recommendations to the plenary or parliamentary leadership for discussion and further action.

b. Implementation

Irrespective of the method used, it is vital that parliaments reflect on the importance of gender equality and the way they promote this goal not only to their electorates, but also to their members.

Taking stock is a first step, after which parliaments can draw up and implement a road map for reform with concrete objectives, actions and deadlines suited to their national context. For this they will need to secure resources.

c. Monitoring

Parliaments should identify a structure entrusted specifically with monitoring implementation of the Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments and efforts to achieve the goal of gender sensitivity.

d. Promotion

Parliaments should give visibility to the reforms undertaken and the results achieved.

Parliaments should take action at the international level to promote the principle of gender equality in all international parliamentary institutions and encourage women's equal participation therein.

Political will and commitment are essential to achieve all of this.

The role of the IPU in supporting gender-sensitive parliaments

For the past 30 years, the IPU has demonstrated its commitment to high-quality and action-oriented research on gender and parliament. The IPU is singularly placed to support its Member Parliaments in their efforts to become gender-sensitive, and through this Plan, undertakes to:

a. Take the lead role in promoting gender-sensitive parliaments by:

- Ensuring high-level commitment to the Plan among Members and regular follow-up of the Plan at its Assemblies.
- Giving visibility to the Plan, including through its website, its Gender Partnership Programme and technical assistance activities.
- Supporting all national parliaments in conducting a gender-sensitive self-assessment by 2030.
- Encouraging parliaments to draw up action plans and establish monitoring mechanisms aimed at strengthening the implementation of parliamentary action plans.
- Strengthening cooperation on the promotion of a gender-sensitive parliament with regional partner organizations and relevant international organizations.

b. Build in-house capacity on gender equality and gender mainstreaming by:

- Implementing a gender mainstreaming strategy.
- Ensuring that professional development training for all IPU staff is gender-sensitive.
- Committing to mainstreaming gender equality throughout the Secretariat's work.

c. Place gender equality issues systematically on the agenda of discussions with Member Parliaments, partner organizations and regional parliamentary organizations by:

- Entrusting the Gender Partnership Group with responsibility for regularly monitoring the gender sensitivity of parliaments.
- Ensuring that gender is mainstreamed into all technical assistance activities.
- Promoting its work on gender-sensitive parliaments in all international forums.

Appendix

Basic definitions

Gender:[a] the social attributes associated with being male and female and the relationships between women, men, girls and boys. These attributes and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization. The concept of gender also includes expectations about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men, and when applied to social analysis, reveals socially constructed roles. "Sex" and "gender" do not mean the same thing. While "sex" refers to biological differences, "gender" refers to social differences, which can be modified, since gender identity, roles and relations are determined by society.

Gender mainstreaming:[a] the process of assessing and taking into account the implications for women and men of any planned action — including legislation, policies or programmes — at all levels and in all spheres. The concept is understood as strategies that put gender issues at the centre of broad policy and programme decisions, institutional structures and resource allocation. Mainstreaming gender equality into the work of parliament should contribute to effective implementation and oversight of policies that address the needs and interests of both men and women.

Gender-sensitive parliament:[a] a parliament that responds to the needs and interests of both men and women in its structures, operations, methods and work. Gender-sensitive parliaments remove the barriers to women's full participation and offer a positive example or model to society at large.

Gender-sensitive budgeting:[a] an approach that aims to mainstream gender in economic policymaking and seeks to transform the entire budgetary process. "Gender budgeting" refers not only to expenditures earmarked for women, but also to an analysis of the entire budget from a gender perspective, including security, health, education, public works, etc., in order to ensure that the allocations and resulting impacts respond to the needs of both women and men.

Gender-based violence:[b] acts of physical, mental or social abuse (including sexual violence) that are attempted or threatened, with some type of force (such as violence, threats, coercion, manipulation, deception, cultural expectations, weapons or economic circumstances) and directed against a person because of his or her gender roles and expectations in a society or culture. A person facing gender-based violence has no choice: he/she cannot refuse or pursue other options without serious social, physical, or psychological consequences. Forms include sexual violence, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, early marriage or forced marriage, gender discrimination, denial (e.g., of education, food and freedom) and female genital mutilation.

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[a] Definitions are taken from UN/OSAGI, UNDP and UNESCO as quoted in "Quick Entry Points to Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in Democratic Governance Clusters", UNDP, New York, 2007 and Equality in Politics: A Survey of Women and Men in Parliaments, IPU, Geneva, 2008.

[b] The definition is adapted from UN-Women, Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls, last accessed on 19 September 2010: http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/347-glossary-of-terms-from-programming-essentials-and-monitoring-and-evaluation-sections.html.